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A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LAUDABLE ASSOCIATION

OF

ANTIGALLICANS,

AT

ST. *GEORGE'S* IN THE *EAST*,

ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1777.

BY JOSIAH DISTURNELL. M.A.

LATE OF PEMBROKE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

THE HONOURABLE CAPTAIN THOMAS SHIRLEY,

LATE

GRAND PRESIDENT;

THE OFFICERS, AND BRETHREN,

OF THE

LAUDABLE ASSOCIATION

OF

ANTIGALLICANS,

THIS SERMON,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST, IS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT,

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LAUDABLE ASSOCIATION

OF

ANTIGALLICANS;

ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1777.

HEBREWS, CHAP. 13, VER. 1.

Let brotherly love continue.

IT has ever been the language of true religion that, *no man liveth to himſelf*; and a little reflection will ſhew that it is alſo the language of the heart. Take a view of man in whatever light you pleaſe, and you will evidently ſee that there is no ſtation, or condition of his life, no office, relation, or circumſtance, but there will ariſe from it ſo many ties, ſo many

indiſpenſable claims upon him, as muſt perpetually carry him beyond any ſelfiſh conſiderations; and ſhew plainly that, was a man weak enough to make the attempt, he would either find it impracticable, or would loſe, at leaſt, the very thing which made life itſelf deſirable.

We know that man is by nature weak, and indigent,—— incapable of himſelf of making any tolerable proviſion for his own welfare——he is liable to many wils which he cannot redreſs———expoſed to many wants, which he is not able to ſupply———and incumbered with many deſires, which he knows not how to gratify. In all theſe reſpects, he calls aloud for the protection and aſſiſtance of his fellow-creatures; and the ſame helpleſs condition, being common to all mankind, neceſſarily fixes the whole ſpecies in a ſtate of mutual dependence. Hence our Creator, whoſe wiſdom and excellence are viſible in all His works, has implanted in mankind ſuch appetites and inclinations as were ſuitable to their ſtate,——that is, ſuch as would naturally lead them to the love of SOCIETY and FRIENDSHIP; without which, our condition would be much worſe than that of thoſe miſerable ſavages who inhabit the woods———ſupport themſelves with the fruits which nature ſpontaneouſly produces; and fear a foe in every man they meet. Even with the privilege of ſociety, and the protection of good and wholeſome laws, there are many interruptions to our peace; but how much

much more dreadful would our ſituation be, when expoſed to the inſult, rapine, and violence of unmerciful and lawleſs men?

But for a further confirmation of this truth; and to point out more forcibly the neceſſity of ſocial intercourſe, let us turn our eyes back to the primitive ages, and view the origin of ſtates and kingdoms. We know not indeed under what particular kinds of government men lived before the flood; but yet we are fully aſſured, by the moſt authentic records, that "The whole earth was filled with violence." This gives us but a diſagreeable picture of the happineſs of thoſe times. The condition of the PATRIARCHS, as we learn from the writings of the Jewiſh law-giver, would not have been very deſirable had it not been for the peculiar interpoſition of Providence. "The frequent contentions of one ſet of herdſmen with another——their being obliged to watch their flocks by night——the difficulty they were under in getting proviſion for their cattle——and eſpecially water, in a country which was almoſt literally what the Pſalmiſt calls it, a barren and dry land, where no water is——add to this, the many famines which they experienced—and their deplorable condition, when they wandered about from one country to another; from one kingdom to another people—continually expoſed to the incurſions of other nations.——

nations."——*Theſe* are ſurely circumſtances ſufficient to prove that this manner of living is but poorly calculated to anſwer either the end of ſecurity or ſubſiſtence.

And if ſuch was the ſtate of the choſen people of God, the caſe of the heathen world was ſtill worſe.—Left to themſelves—with no other rule to guide them than what the dim light of reaſon afforded——inſufficient at beſt——and the more ſo, when obſcured by the groſſeſt error and ſuperſtition ——under theſe diſadvantages, they could make but a very inconſiderable progreſs towards happineſs. Accordingly we find that, as their notions of RELIGION were erroneous and imperfect, ſo were they equally miſtaken with regard to the SOCIAL PRINCIPLES—— their love of man was as narrow and confined as their love of God.

From this ſketch of the infant ſtate of SOCIETY, it may be eaſy to collect how ſmall the ſum of human happineſs muſt have been in thoſe ages of the world, when the minds of men were governed by ſelf-love, and dominion was founded upon violence and uſurpation.

Hence we may plainly diſcover the ſuperior bleſſings of SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.——Hence it is evident, that to ſoften the wants, and calm the anxieties of life; to compoſe the tumults

tumults which pride, avarice and ambition—began to excite in the primitive age; and to eſtabliſh and perpetuate felicity in the world, was the great and wiſe deſign of political ſocieties. For this, we were originally formed by our Maker. The boaſt—therefore of abſolute independence; or even of independence upon our fellow-creatures muſt be altogether vain and chimerical. How could the rich be cloathed, or fed, or their numerous wants ſupplied, were it not for the poor, the laborious, the induſtrious? What is the title of ſovereign without SUBJECTS? Where the utility of laws without OBEDIENCE?

In human life we are linked together by a chain formed by the Hand of Omnipotence; and to this connection both duty and neceſſity ſhould engage us to ſubmit. The happineſs of individuals can never ariſe from the ſingle exerciſe of *ſelfiſh* principles. If a man would thoroughly enjoy his own being, he muſt of neceſſity look *beyond* it: his private ſatisfactions always encreaſing in the ſame proportion with which he promotes thoſe of others. To be truly happy, he muſt be truly benevolent and good—he muſt teſtify a ſenſe of his duty by anſwering the ends of his being—by living to his God—to his King—to his Country.

Thus formed for SOCIETY, it becomes us as men, and as Chriſtians, to contribute, as much as in us lieth, to its welfare and ſupport. But whatever other expedients we may make uſe of for this deſirable purpoſe, nothing, I truſt, will be found more efficacious than——*brotherly love*——that is, a mutual communication of good offices. If inſtead of kindneſs and affection we received each other with averſion and diſdain; if inſtead of promoting harmony and peace, we were active to introduce anarchy, diſorder, and confuſion, what ſhould we gain by the connexion? What beneficial intercourſe can poſſibly be carried on between men, if theſe miſchievous principles are to prevail in determining their conduct? It is too melancholy a truth that the happineſs of any community is diſturbed and diminiſhed, in proportion to the diſaffection and malevolence that ariſe in it—a truth dreadfully confirmed by the experience of paſt ages—and to which, unhappily for us, *our own*, I fear, will in ſome degree bear teſtimony.

Are we deſirous of ſuppreſſing this pernicious evil, and of promoting the far more amiable diſpoſition of *brotherly love*—— we ſhall do well to conſider what various miſchiefs and miſeries a ſpirit of malevolence is capable of creating———how many ways it contributes to diſturb our happineſs and embitter our lives.

lives. And here, it were eaſy to ſhew how unavoidably it deſtroys the peace of our minds, by introducing needleſs diſquietudes, and by kindling the coals of ſtrife and contention.—It were eaſy to ſhew how deeply it injures our reputation by giving riſe to the propagation of calumny and ſlander——by cauſing the faireſt actions to be miſrepreſented, and by rendering it almoſt impoſſible for a man, with his utmoſt endeavours, to give general content. We might alſo obſerve how it tends to corrupt our underſtandings, as it infuſes innumerable prejudices, and repreſents queſtions and facts in a falſe light——but more eſpecially ſhould we conſider how much it depraves our morals; as it tends to confound the very diſtinctions of good and evil —to root up our kind affections, and inſtead of them, to fill our hearts with rage and rancour. Nor is it leſs injurious to the *public* peace; nothing can have a greater tendency to embroil a ſtate, and throw it into the utmoſt diſorder. As ſure as *brotherly love* and unity are the bond of ſociety, ſo ſure are diviſion and ſtrife the bane of it. Thoſe diſcordant aims and interfering motions, which they generally create, muſt neceſſarily occaſion obſtructions in the wheels of GOVERNMENT; and, when carried to exceſs and of long continuance, will weaken the very beſt and firmeſt conſtitution.

Far

Far more pleaſing the ſcene --- far more natural the connection --- a Society flouriſhing in peace, and cemented by *brotherly love*; where all the members are inviolably attached to the public good, and harmoniouſly engaged in the ſervice thereof --- where unfeigned good-will, and allegiance, undiſſembled by art, univerſally prevails. What can be more delightful than ſuch a labor of love? What more effectually advance and eſtabliſh the public happineſs, and the welfare of every individual? Such it is preſumed, is the diſintereſted plan of a diſtinguiſhed * aſſociation lately eſtabliſhed in this Metropolis. Such, in particular, the laudable intent of that reſpectable SOCIETY, which we are this day aſſembled to commemorate. A SOCIETY wiſely inſtituted, in teſtimony of their loyalty to their Sovereign, and love of their Country --- to excite an honeſt emulation amongſt their fellow-citizens, by encouraging the Britiſh manufactures, in preference to thoſe of a foreign nation. Here its enemies will perhaps object (for the moſt excellent inſtitutions, as well as the moſt ſacred characters, *have* their enemies) that our benevolence ſhould not be confined to any particular country; that every good Chriſtian will conſider himſelf as a Citizen of the world --- and that the Jews and Samaritans, though trained up with a peculiar degree of mutual rancour, were entitled, by the laws

* Aſſociated Livery.

laws of God, to mutual protection and ſupport. In anſwer to this, it is one thing to confine our benevolence; another, our encouragement of arts, manufactures, and commerce. Every nation, however diſtinguiſhed from our own, whether by the prejudices of education, the oppoſition of intereſt, or differences in religion, has a natural claim to the former --- but the induſtrious of our own in particular, have a ſuperior — a more undoubted claim to the latter. It will readily be granted, that the love of our country is then only commendable, when it is reaſonable—and ſurely it cannot be deemed unreaſonable, when engaged in ſupport of honeſt induſtry; in oppoſing the introduction of foreign commodities at the expence of domeſtic happineſs. Our charity ſhould *begin*, but not *end*, at home. Whenever our zeal leads us to act counter to the natural rights of any other community, it is then irrational and unjuſt; but, I truſt, it is not ſo, when exerted in defence of thoſe of our own. Every true lover of his country will obſerve this diſtinction. As a man he will wiſh well to all — As a member of ſociety, he will be particularly careful "to provide for his own; and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſehold."

For want of attention to this particular, amongſt the Greeks and Romans, many of their eminent leaders, to advance the wealth and grandeur of their own people, made no ſcruple to

oppreſs and plunder other nations — for this, their courage and conduct are placed in the moſt favourable light by their own ingenious and partial Hiſtorians; but, if examined by the rules of reaſon and equity, muſt ſtand condemned as ſo many acts of injuſtice and cruelty.

Let it be ours, my Brethren, upon all occaſions, to act a more noble, a more generous part. In our reſpective ſtations, as members of the community in general, or of any ſociety in particular, we *all* have it in our power to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by this truly chriſtian virtue — *brotherly love*. As chriſtians then by profeſſion, let us in honor of that profeſſion be chriſtians in practice alſo. However divided in ſentiment, let us, in obedience to the Author of our religion, be united in charity — which is "the bond of peace and of all virtues." In a word, "let all bitterneſs and wrath, anger, clamor, and evil-ſpeaking" be baniſhed from our minds; for, by a reverſe of conduct, we entirely preclude all hopes of that *unity of Spirit*, which, if once attained, would remove numberleſs cauſes of our preſent evils, and greatly increaſe the happineſs of mankind.

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F I N I S.